

Meeting #8 Summary

Ford Site Planning Task Force members present: Carole Faricy, Co-Chair, Peter Armstrong, Shawn Bartsh, James Bricher, Ronnie Brooks, David Drach, Terri Dooher Fleming, Charles Hathaway, Deborah Karasov, Scott Malcolm, Gary Marx, Lance Neckar, Jim Reinitz, Dennis Rosemark, Dave Sellergren, Stuart Simek, Bruce Valen, Stephanie Warne, Pam Wheelock **Absent:** Richard Broderick, William Klein, Angela Kline, Matthew Schruerger, Morgan Tamsky, Ellen Watters

City Staff, others agency reps or consultants present: Cecile Bedor (PED), Patty Lilledahl (PED), Merritt Clapp-Smith (PED), Luis Pereira (PED), Bill Vitek (EDAW), Bob Close and Bruce Jacobson (Close Landscape Architects), David Graham (ESG), Randal Tweden (ESG), Fred Dock (Iteris), Caren Dewar (Dewar), Monte Hilleman (Port Authority), Jeff Patterson (Colliers), and Geoff Martin for John Shardlow (Ford planning rep).

Others Attending (based on meeting sign-in sheet): Dee DePass, Marissa Helms, Jason Hoppin, Jane McClure, Tim Griffin, David Daly, Mary Davis, Bretton Jones, Mat Hollinshead, Lynn Hinkle, and Charles Nelson.

The meeting was called to order by co-chair Carole Faricy at 6:35 PM. Meeting summary #6 (5/7/07) was approved, and a motion to amend the previous meeting summary (5/21/07) was approved, noting the change in recorded attendance to show that Stephanie Warne was present and Ronnie Brooks was absent.

Merritt Clapp-Smith, PED's Ford Site Planning project manager, announced that over the next two weeks, there would be various opportunities for Task Force (TF) engagement, including a public open house at Hillcrest Recreation Center on June 5th during the day and the third public meeting the evening of June 5th. At the third public meeting, the Consultant Team would present the 5 Draft alternative scenarios, and the public could ask questions and provide comments. The next TF meeting, an extra one scheduled for June 11th, would include another analysis by Colliers of the most recent versions of the alternative scenarios. That meeting would provide the TF's last chance to request substantive revisions to the draft scenarios. Then at the final Phase I TF meeting to be held June 18th, the Consultant Team would present the revised scenarios to be analyzed in Phase II of the Ford planning process. Through June and August, PED staff will scope the work for Phase II, and in September 2007 the TF will reconvene for the Phase II work.

Questions/comments from the TF included:

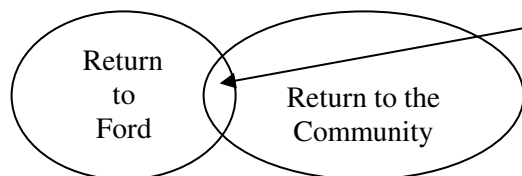
- Q-Whether there needed to be as many as five scenarios. A-There was no mandate for as many as five to be analyzed in Phase II, but it is necessary to include a sufficient range of land use possibilities to analyze how they are different.
- A request for an analysis about what various land uses mean in terms of tax base. The existing property tax figures for the Ford site were already provided to the TF (\$1,250,000 in 2005).
- Q-What does it mean when the TF forwards five scenarios into Phase II for analysis? A-It means that the TF supports further analysis of the recommended scenarios during Phase II. The TF will have the chance during Phase II to review environmental data, tax base and fiscal impacts, and the recommended mitigation strategies to help make a decision about what type of land use mix to recommend for a redeveloped site. The TF would convene periodically to consider new information and make adjustments to the scenarios for analysis purposes, if necessary.
- Concerns about the current scenario illustrations, including the large size/massing of building footprints and the lack of integrated green space, compared to the acreage of other land uses. A related question was about whether the TF really needed to get so detailed at this point in terms of exact building layouts and precise land use mixes on the site. Clapp-Smith clarified that the scenarios really needed to

have acreage and unit counts for the technical analysis in Phase II (AUAR). Consultant Team principal Bill Vitek added that there *was* a need to get to a degree of reality, including realistic footprints, but more importantly, whether the proportions of land proposed for various land uses in the illustrations were correct. The location of the various land uses is important as well.

Vitek reminded the TF that this was an iterative process, based on constant feedback from the TF and the public. He used TF member Jim Bricher's proposed 6th scenario, which included different elements of the various scenarios as an example of such feedback. Vitek said that the "list of fundamental elements" provided by the TF had been studied and incorporated into the latest round of draft scenarios, including the importance of the Critical Area Zoning Overlay, a need for jobs on the site, a need to address transportation issues in various ways, a need to connect and integrate with the neighborhood, and a need to create economic return in the market. He also reminded TF members of the working vision statement and goal categories.

Comments from the TF included:

- The idea of "economic return" should be more expansive than how it has been defined – as a return to Ford as the landholder – and should include "return" to the community. It is really about where "the circles overlap," i.e.:



- The 'fundamental elements' defined by the TF at their last meeting should combine the categories of elements under "CP Rail Corridor" and "Transportation" into one category to more clearly show how important transportation and traffic is compared to other category groups on the list. There was disagreement about this point, with the counter-argument that traffic considerations must be weighed together with *all* of the fundamental elements, to seek a future that balances the full breadth of neighborhood and City goals. Another TF member argued that traffic *is* key, given how many drivers wait through 4 stoplights before crossing the intersection at Ford Parkway and Cleveland, and therefore, the fundamental element list should be amended to note that traffic is the most important category. Another TF member suggested that traffic mitigation language be added to the vision statement, but others disagreed, saying that this element ought not receive priority status, as a balance is what is sought. Another TF member said that traffic calming is key to site design. It was noted that Consultant Fred Dock will provide updated trip generation info. soon.
- The land use mixes in the scenarios are okay, but how the infrastructure is designed will greatly influence how traffic is managed. Vitek responded that all of the scenarios are frameworks of connectivity, some with 4 main road connections, others with up to 8. At this point, the road frameworks respond to the land uses depicted, but do not have a level of specificity such as turn lanes or other design details.

Next, Bill Vitek introduced the baseline assumptions of the revised scenarios, noting especially that they do not account for existing zoning except for the Critical Area and Airport Zoning Overlay (from a height stand point).

The baseline scenario (#1) proposes the site stays as a predominantly industrial use (as required by the AUAR, one of the scenarios tested includes land uses that are consistent with the Comprehensive Plan). Some of the existing Albert Kahn assembly building remains for reuse, with additional new industrial pad sites. The CP rail corridor is retained for heavy rail to serve the industrial uses. Two to three story retail buildings are added along Ford Parkway with office above. Three road connections to Mississippi River Boulevard (MRB) are envisioned for vehicular and truck access to the industrial properties. Vitek said that semi-trailer use of MRB could be restricted, as it currently is. Most TF members agreed with this restriction.

Scenario #2 proposes a Mixed Use – Light Industrial / Flex Tech site, in which a balance of light industrial (45 acres) is included, serviced by a Cretin to Montreal road connection. The rail corridor becomes an on-grade road connection for traffic alleviation, which does not preclude light rail along it later. Retail / Office spaces are added on Ford Parkway, and the scenario includes a mixture of residential, from single family detached homes to medium density townhomes and apartments/condos. A TF member asked how employees could live on site, and Vitek responded that local employers and banks can provide incentives for this. He noted that the “next generation worker” is more typically looking for housing near the workplace. A TF member stated that many residents along Mississippi River Boulevard favor this scenario as being most consistent with the existing character (light industrial off MRB). Another TF member said a bike path would be useful for kids to get to the ballfields. Ford’s representative on the TF suggested that the percent of industrial land use on this site could be lessened. Vitek said that structured parking is key to this site’s redevelopment, given that it is valuable land, and is important to adjacent property owners. A TF member said it matters where structured parking is located, as well as how it’s financed. Vitek advocated a district parking approach.

Scenario #3 envisions a Mixed Use site, with an emphasis on Office / Institutional uses. The office space might be occupied principally by a corporate user and potentially include R & D onsite. It is not envisioned as predominantly a warehouse/distribution center. A plaza is included around which the office and housing are situated, and it serves as a place for a transit stop along the CP corridor reused for transit. Retail is included along Ford Parkway. Several connections to MRB are included with a series of boulevards.

Scenario #4 is a Mixed Use Urban Village. This scenario includes more retail along Ford Parkway and more lower and medium density housing. A road connection south of Lunds shopping center is envisioned with shared parking to serve the existing and new uses. The rail corridor is proposed as a greenway/trail—which did not sit well with TF members, who liked to see it preserved for either transit or a road in the future. Another TF member stated that this scenario takes a unique space and breaks it up into a lot of single family lots – losing its appeal.

Scenario #5 is a High Density Urban Transit Village. More open space (44% of the site) is included as a trade-off for the increased density of housing and nonresidential uses. The CP rail corridor becomes a transit corridor, with structured parking located below the office and residential point towers. Ford’s representative on the TF commented that 2,000 housing units will require *more* retail than the other scenarios, not less (as proposed in this scenario). One TF member questioned why there was such a density of housing along MRB, and why it was not just a park. One Consultant Team member replied by saying that this scenario evolved from an earlier rejection of a large amount of open space along the river. Another TF member said that the proposed open space in this scenario lacked programming and was not “finely-grained,” arguing that the scenario needed a way to answer questions such as how the park space would create value for users or adjacent properties. Vitek agreed, but said that at this point it is more important to determine whether 44% of the site is the right percentage of the site to be depicted for open space. Ford’s representative questioned whether this large amount of open space would create enough value to pay for itself. Other TF members wondered whether the residential units near MRB were able to access the transit.

Next, Fred Dock of Iteris displayed the latest traffic analysis done about these 5 scenarios. He showed graphs for the number of morning and evening vehicular trips associated with each proposed scenario. All 5 scenarios are about half as intense in terms of the peak hour trips associated with earlier scenarios, given the internal “trip capture” associated with mixed uses. Scenario 3 has the maximum number of trips associated with it, will Scenario 1 is similar to current range of trips. Scenarios 2 and 4 create a bit more than Scenario 1, but are within the same range. Scenario 5 creates less trips than 3. Transit has not yet been factored into these calculations, but it can account for a reduction in vehicular trips of 5-20%.

Monte Hilleman of the Port Authority provided estimates of the total number of retail, office, and industrial jobs associated with each scenario (as presented on 6/4/07). Scenario 1 creates approximately 2,486 jobs, Scenario 2 – 2,113 jobs, Scenario 3 – 10,500 jobs, Scenario 4 – 1,300 jobs, and Scenario 5 – 6,500 jobs.

Jeff Patterson of Colliers gave an update on the market analysis. According to Colliers, Scenario 3's proposed 3 million square feet of office space is not close to market reality. This would be like the corporate offices of Cargill, Medtronic, and General Mills combined. Scenario 5's proposed 1.9 million square feet of office space also exceeds what would be viable in the market. On the other hand, said Patterson, 2,000 housing units would probably be absorbed in the market. A TF member questioned whether it made sense to distinguish between light industrial and office uses in these scenarios. Many TF members agreed that it did not, but one TF member responded by saying that if the market does not support such office space, it could be changed to residential (and retail, if the market supports it). Another TF member said it seemed to be a "slamdunk" for housing, but that the TF has larger goals to meet, which may not be so easy. Patterson reiterated that up to 45 acres of industrial use was probably appropriate for this site.

Geoff Martin of DSU/Bonestroo spoke next, representing the Ford Motor Co. He made three points on behalf of Ford: 1) He repeated the goal of financial feasibility for Ford (the landowner), but added the caveat that whatever is proposed must respond to market conditions at the time the land is sold; 2) He recommended that all scenarios include that the MNSCU training facility be maintained and reused, and 3) He advised that in addition to the baseline scenario, the TF should make sure that one/all of the other scenarios push the maximum development potential for the site, in terms of land carrying capacity and density/intensity of land use. The reason for this is that if the maximum development potential is assessed with the AUAR, any scenario that proposes a less intensive land use mix would still be able to draw upon the results of the AUAR in terms of mitigation (no new AUAR would be needed).

A discussion resulted, including the following points:

- That the environmental contamination on the site and the required mitigation steps may change the perception of market viability of this site. Monte Hilleman of the Port Authority responded by saying that Colliers would do valuations of each of the 5 scenarios to determine the maximum value that each could get in the market.
- The point that this TF acknowledges Ford's return on investment
- The question about whether the scenario with large single family lots was appropriate for current and future population demographics, and the desire to be able to live/work/rec./shop all in one neighborhood
- The point that this site could be a "market maker," and that there was enough potential for retail
- Regarding the amount of open space, Geoff Martin said that typically, 10-20% of open space is for stormwater, another 10% is for actual green space. A TF member said that she was surprised to hear that the developers' panel recommended that there be more open space on the site.
- The need to do more open space analysis – to program it
- The need for this site's reuse to contribute to the City and region, the need to influence/inspire, and meet the goals of the City/Regional Comprehensive Plan
- That if the site's redevelopment receives public funds, it must meet the appropriate "bar"

The meeting adjourned.